1. (Amended) A purified decoy probe comprising:

a first nucleotide base recognition sequence region, wherein said first region binds to an RNA polymerase; and

an optionally present second nucleotide base recognition sequence region,

provided that if said first region is nucleic acid, then said second region is either directly joined to the 5' end of said first region or is joined to the 3' end or 5' end of said first region by a non-nucleotide linker, wherein said optionally present second region is present if said first region can be used to produce a functional double-stranded promoter sequence using a complementary oligonucleotide,

further provided that if said first region is nucleic acid which can be used to produce said functional double-stranded promoter sequence using said complementary oligonucleotide, then said decoy probe does not have a nucleic acid sequence greater than about 10 nucleotides in length joined directly to the 3' end of said first region and said decoy probe does not have a 3' end that can participate in a polymerase reaction.

2. (Amended) The probe of claim 1, wherein said first region is nucleic acid.

7. (Amended) The probe of claim 6, wherein said probe consists of 35 to 70 independently selected nucleotides and said one or more blocking groups.

11. (Amended) A purified decoy probe comprising:

a first nucleotide base recognition sequence region, wherein said first region has at least 35% sequence similarity to an RNA polymerase promoter sequence; and

an optionally present second nucleotide base recognition sequence region,

provided that if said first region is nucleic acid, then said second region is either directly joined to the 5' end of said first region or is joined to the 3' end or 5' end of said first region by a non-nucleotide linker, wherein said optionally present second region is present if said first

region can be used to produce a functional double-stranded promoter sequence using a complementary oligonucleotide,

further provided that if said first region is nucleic acid which can be used to produce said functional double-stranded promoter sequence using said complementary oligonucleotide, then said decoy probe does not have a nucleic acid sequence greater than about 10 nucleotides in length joined directly to the 3' end of said first region and said decoy probe does not have a 3' end that can participate in a polymerase reaction.

12. (Amended) The probe of claim 11, wherein said first region is nucleic acid.

15. (Amended) The probe of claim 14, wherein said probe consists of 35 to 70 independently selected nucleotides and said one or more blocking groups.

34. (New) The probe of claim 1, wherein said probe contains a region of self-complementarity.

35. (New) The probe of claim 11, wherein said probe contains a region of self-complementarity.

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Remarks

Claims 1, 2, 7, 11, 12 and 15 have been preliminarily amended herein in a manner fully supported by the specification, and claims 19-33 have been canceled without prejudice to the prosecution of the subject matter of these claims in this or a future continuing application.

Claims 34 and 35 are newly added and depend from claims 1 and 11, respectively. New claims 34 and 35 are supported in the specification at, for example, page 10, lines 10-12.